1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

the ground, and well oiled. A silver ornament, or a few rupees, placed at the top, reward the successful climber." A leg of mutton, or a piece of pork fixed at the top of this pole would render the pastime identical with the "greasy-pole" climbing of English villages. The following are some other Khasi games:—

Wrestling; two persons grasping each other's hands with the fingers interlocked, and then trying to push one another down; tug-of-war with a piece of stick, the two combatants placing their feet one against the other; butting at one another like bulls, and trying to upset each other (*ia tur masi*); long jump; high jump; blind-man's buff; flying kites; pitching cowries into a hole in the ground; a game like marbles, only played with round pebbles, and others.

MANUFACTURES.

The manufactures of the Khasis are few in number, and do not seem to show any tendency to increase. On the contrary, two of the most important industries, the smelting of iron ore and the forging of iron implements therefrom, and the cotton-spinning industries at Mynso and Suhtnga, show signs of dying out. Ploughshares and hoes and bill-hooks can now be obtained more cheaply from the plains than from the forges in the hills, and Manchester piece goods are largely taking the place of cloths of local manufacture. The iron industry in former days was an important one, and there is abundant evidence that the workings were on a considerable scale, e.g. at Nongkrem and Laitlyngkot, in the shape of large granite boulders which have fallen to the ground from the sides of the hills owing to the softer rock which filled the interstices between the boulders having been worked out by the iron-workers, their process being to dig out the softer ferruginous rock, and then extract the iron ore from it by means of washing. The softer rock having been removed, the heavier portions fell by their own weight, and rolled down to the bottom of the slopes, the result being the great number of boulders to be seen near the sites of these workings.

10: Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

in these hills a dozen monuments on the binary type may scarcely be found in which there are two equal upright slabs in the middle, and the other stones placed symmetrically on each side of them.

7. There are three kinds of rock employed by the Khasis for stone monuments, viz.:—

a. The Cherra sandstones.
b. The Shillong sandstones.
c. The granite.

Small stones are conveyed considerable distances from the place of manufacture before they are set up—large stones are not—hence the material of the monuments is determined everywhere geologically.

a. The Cherra sandstones are tertiary and cretaceous rocks spread along the southern edge of the plateau and producing the ledges which mark its abrupt termination. In the great thickness of these sandstones are many beds in which the rock occurs in large sheets with very few joints, and well-adapted for working out large slabs therefrom. The sandstone is generally very hard, but not so hard but that the Khasis can work it with their own native-made iron tools.

There is a quarry, now in full work, about half-a-mile out of the old Cherra cantonment, upon the Mamloo path, where slabs may be seen in preparation. The slabs made from the Cherra sandstones, admitting of being worked, are generally hewn pretty fairly to a shape and smoothed before being set up. The ancient monuments are, however, often made of very rough slabs.

All the well-known monuments near the old Cherra station are made of these sandstones, as also the large monuments at Mamloo, Mausmai, and Lirinow. These three monuments all stand on sheets of Cherra sandstone and the stones were cut out of the rock hard by where they now stand. The stones quarried now outside the Cherra cantonment, being for transport, are none of great size.

The Khasis also work gigantic slabs of stone for bridges. Where the span is anything under twenty feet a single slab four or five feet wide and two feet thick is thrown across; piers of enormous blocks of sandstone are raised on each side, on which the slab may rest, if there is the remotest fear that the water can, in any flood, reach the under surface of the slab. As compared with such a bridge the Khasis regard the best efforts of the English engineers as mere makeshifts. The arch at Amwee, figured by Dr. Hooker is Bengali work.

b. The Shillong sandstones extend over a large area of the northern portion of the plateau: they are often more argillaceous

10: Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

in East Jaintea, according to the Khasis, who are good geo- 135
logists.

These granite blocks are found on the steep hill sides and on the hill tops, the valleys between being often entirely destitute of them. The highest hills of the plateau are especially favoured with them as Nongbas (Nonklow) and Laitlankote. On the edges of the granite area and on the isolated peaks of the country, outlying heaps of granite blocks are found. Around Jowya (the Jaintea capital), the country is very uniformly at a level of about 4000-4500 feet above the sea, and not a granite block is to be seen there, nor in marching east thence, where you keep at the same level, until you reach the Ralliang hill about twelve miles east of Jowya, where the blocks appear again in full force all over the summit of the hill.

From these granite blocks, slabs of almost any size might be 316
obtained, but the Khasi native iron tools will not work this granite, which is very hard, and the granite slabs used in the Khasi monuments are merely flakes obtained by heating the block with fire along a line and then pouring cold water upon it. The upright granite slabs thus frequently exhibit one convex and one concave face, as also do the horizontal slabs which are round or oval, not quadrangular. The flakes are entirely unworked in the Khasi territory, so that the granite monuments have an extreme rudeness and ruggedness about them which has been commonly supposed to indicate extreme antiquity. This I believe is altogether a mistake, but at the present time the taste of the people appears educated up to a preference for worked stones, and I have not seen any granite monument in process of construction, though I am told that many have been made within the memory of men.

There is an important difference in the Jaintea granitic monuments which are mostly worked to the approved form. The Bengali Rajahs of the plains Jaintea and Jaintiapore, have long established an influence in the hills, and Bengali workmen have thus penetrated the hills from Jaintiapore by Amwee up to Jowya, the hill capital, and further. The Bengali tools are able to fashion this hard granite, and the gigantic slabs, whether used for monuments or for bridges, are commonly found neatly hewn, all the way from Jaintiapore up to Nartiang, north of Jowya.

Large granite stones are either more difficult to move than sandstones of the same dimensions, and the first class granite monuments are found on the spot where the granite blocks abound. Where an isolated hill was covered with large blocks, and no blocks were seen anywhere else near, this seems at once to have suggested such a hill as a suitable spot for monumental erections. In just the same way at Stonehenge the large stones

10:Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR7 Khasi AR7

316 were all found within 200 yards of where they now stand, as may be inferred from the stray stone at about that distance from Stonehenge and not made use of: the small stones were probably brought a considerable distance from the greensand area in the north of the county.

316 485 8. In the setting up of these monuments the Khasis at the present day use only the simplest and most direct mechanical means. For transporting a big stone wooden rollers are placed beneath it and the stone is then drawn by a large number of men harnessed to it by rattan ropes. To set one of the slabs upright, one end is slipped into a hole dug 1-3 feet in the ground, while the other end is tugged by similar ropes. For putting one stone upon another, as in a horizontal slab monument, it is drawn up a sloping stage of bamboo, but if the slab be of great weight, a slope of earth must be constructed, up which it may be pulled. These are the present Khasi methods, and it is, of course, highly probable that similar resources were employed in ancient times. I add a more particular account of some of the larger monuments.

311 9. The monument on the Government main road, about six miles north of Cherra, not far from the village of Lirinow, stands on sheets of Cherra sandstone, out of which the slabs were cut. The tallest stones were about fifteen feet out of the ground. The five stones on the left-hand side (west) of the road were erected when I first visited the hills. The five stones on the right-hand side were erected about four years ago, the family to whom the monument belongs having determined on such an addition. The two portions form one indivisible monument, and exactly correspond, the stones being accurately worked and rounded. The two top-knots are seen in several other monuments, but must, I think, be held proof always of a very late date for their erection. At the Mausmai [53] monument a large rosette is carved on the face of the middle of the big central upright slab, which is also I presume modern work.

10. The monument at Mamloo village. This is, perhaps, the monument in all the hills which exhibits the largest slabs of Cherra sandstone. It stands on sheets of the same rock and there can be little doubt that the slabs were cut on the spot. It is of the (less usual) binary type.

11. The monuments at Rambrai in the west of Khasi-land. These consist of numerous horizontal and vertical slabs of no great size, the upright slabs being 4-8 feet out of the ground, but remarkable for their arrangement on a long open slope outside the village. The monuments stand all close together, collected as in a churchyard, so that it is not easy to separate

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

vation is impossible because of the cold climate. In the past, Khasi economy must have remained at a very primitive stage.

Potato cultivation has been much encouraged along with the development of Shillong and the opening of the motor road to Gauhati from Shillong after the Independence of India when Shillong became the seat of the Assam Government, as well as the capital of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Shillong has become an important trading centre, where big merchants collect the harvests of potatoes in exchange for rice, clothes and various other goods from the Assam valley. These changes have introduced the Khasis into an active commercial economy which again has brought about various changes in their social life. Recently coal excavations have started in the upland Khasi Hills, and many Khasi become miners.

Thus the history of the Khasi Hills during the last hundred years has changed a great deal the picture of the Hills. However, dark corners still remain in Bhoi, War and in the area bordering on the Garo Hills. These have been kept in a vacuum between the Hindu civilization of the bordering plain and the modernization of the uplands centred in Shillong. In these areas, the people are still practising primitive jhum cultivation. I have chosen two villages in War located in one of these area as subjects of my major field-work.

[P. 100 is blank]

children, but Christian influence has eradicated or driven underground the consumption by women and children. **Industrial arts.** The only industrial arts traditionally practiced in all households were a rudimentary carpentry and a simple utilitarian basketry. Other arts were few, and were practiced as village specialties: the washing and smelting of iron ore and the forging of hoes, daos, knives, swords, and cooking pots (upland Khasis); the spinning of cotton thread (Mynso village, Jaintia); the dyeing of cotton thread and the weaving of cloth (Jaintias, Bhois, Lyngngams, Wars); the spinning and weaving of Eri silk (Khyrwang and Nongtung villages, Bhoi and Jaintia); and the hand manufacture, without wheel, of painted earthenware pots (Larnai village, Jaintia). Ironworking and the production of cotton goods have nearly died out through the competition of machine-made goods. Carpentry has greatly improved. An innovation of major importance is the sewing and tailoring, on sewing machines, of ready-made garments for both sexes. [Cf. Darrah 1896; C., W. 1832.] **Trade.** Khasi villages normally contain a number of household shops operated by women. Every Khasi also lives within walking distance of several village markets that are held on successive days of the eight-day week. The limits of market intercourse for the members of any particular village can be roughly distinguished by their naming the days of their week, which are called after the active markets. The exception is the huge market at Shillong, much of which is active daily, and which serves as a magnet for Khasis from all over the hills. The traditional barter has given way to currency in all markets. The small ones contain at least some local farm produce, plus other essentials like betel nut, and the food and tea stalls which serve as centers of social intercourse. The big markets contain not only regional produce and manufactures but also products from distant parts of the hills, brought for sale by traveling middlemen. There is also substantial trade, from the hills to the valleys, in potatoes, pears, hides, lac, cotton, caoutchouc, the wood of the sal tree, Eri silk thread, limestone, coal, ivory, bay leaf, betel nut, pan leaves, bananas, sugar cane, oranges, til, turmeric, and chilies. From the plains to the hills, there is trade in dried fish, paddy rice, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, matches, tea, sugar, wheat flour, machine-made cloth, shoes, metal pots, crockery, porcelain objects, coral beads, silver, and gold. Markets are important not only as economic institutions but also as centers for recreation (including archery competitions), courtship, reaffirmation of kinship ties with distant relatives, and the dissemination of information of all kinds. [Cf. Stegmiller 1924a.] **Division of labor.** Men do the heavy work, such as clearing and burning the swidden fields, caring for cattle and goats and driving them to market, butchering and selling large cuts of beef and pork, carpentry and mining, and driving and laboring on motor vehicles. They also tailor men's

276 177 335 285 184 [283] [386] [186] [323] 177 178 [326] [286] [337] [294] 443 444 [805] [437] [178] [443] [438] [441] [526] [583] [602] [203] 462 [241] [231] [443] [335] [316] [493] 000

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

In former years the Khásiás were great iron-smelters, and enormous excavations in the most favourable localities for obtaining ironstone prove the extent to which this manufacture was carried on. In some places the whole surface of the ground appears to have been dug up for a depth of several feet, leaving huge boulders standing up here and there. Of late years, however, as the price of labour in the Hills has risen, the trade in iron has died away, and there is now little demand for the Khásí article, the cheaper English metal having driven it out of the market.

NATURAL PHENOMENA.—Many peculiar caves and caverns are found in the limestone rock formation, the most notable being the caves at Cherrá Púnji and at Rúpnáth in Amwi. At the latter place the caverns extend a great distance beneath the earth, one being imagined by the people to reach as far as China, and a Hindu legend states that a Chinese army once marched by this route to the invasion of India. In another cave, the limestone stalactites have been carved into images representing the gods of the Hindu pantheon. On the banks of the Kapilí river on the Cáchár border, at a place called Sumir, there is a hot spring, the water of which contains carbonate of lime. All the rivers in the Hills flow through gorges in certain parts of their course, the most picturesque being at Tehriá, where a small stream is compressed into deep pools among limestone rocks; and at Darrang and Borghát, where the Mangat and Mantideo rivers respectively debouch upon the plains.

FORESTS, ETC.—The India-rubber or caoutchouc tree is found in many forests throughout the Hills, but not in great numbers, and the supply and value of the gum has much decreased of late years. In 1870 the right of tapping the trees in the Jáintiá Hills was leased out for a sum of £36, 12s. 0d.; but by 1876 the trade had almost entirely ceased. There are some tracts of timber forest on the lower hills towards the Brahmaputra valley, but through the want of water carriage they are of no great value. Vigorous efforts are being made to preserve the forests in the higher plateaux. Owing to the habit of firing the jungle in spring prior to sowing, great waste of valuable timber has taken place; but since the country has been separated from Bengal and placed under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, attention has been given to the matter, and special areas are now being set apart for the preservation and growth of forest timber. Cinnamon grows wild in some parts of the country. There is a considerable trade carried on in

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

The coal strata at the former place are calculated to extend over one-third of a square mile, with an average thickness of from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet; and the yield of the coal, if it could be worked, is estimated at 447,000 tons. At the latter spot the area of the coal-fields is computed to extend over 0·394 of a square mile, and the estimated yield of the mineral is about 1,100,000 tons. The coal at Cherrá Púnjí and at Lá-ká-dong is in quality equal to some English coals; it is quick in its action, and consequently would generate steam rapidly; it cakes well, but gives out a large amount of smoke; it is fragile and easily broken. From the absence of that definite structure which produces the planes of division known to English miners as 'backs,' or joints in the coal, it breaks into unsymmetrical pieces, and consequently does not stow well. From its composition, quick combustion, and irregular cleavage, it is estimated to be from 5 to 7 per cent. inferior to good English coal; but as a gas-producing coal it is considered superior to English produce, both as regards quality and purity of the gas. It is also calculated to yield a good quality of coke. The market value of coal found in the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills cannot be given with any approach to accuracy, owing to the expense of labour in the Hills and of carriage to the plains. The Station of Shillong, which consumes coal as fuel, derives its supply from the coal beds at Máo-beh-lyrkár, 18 miles distant, and the price is as high as £3 per ton. Lá-ká-dong is within six miles of Borghát, a village on an affluent of the Surmá, which is accessible all the year round by boats of 500 maunds, or 28 tons burden; but at present only coolie-carriage is available between Lá-ká-dong and Borghát.

The following is a brief history of the mines at Cherrá Púnjí in the Khásí Hills, and at Lá-ká-dong in the Jáintiá Hills:—Government holds a perpetual lease of the Cherrá Púnjí mines from the chief or Siem of Cherrá, conditionally upon the payment by Government of a royalty of two shillings and eightpence for every five tons of coal quarried and removed from the mine, and also upon the terms that the people of Cherrá shall be permitted to work the beds on their own account. In 1844 Government transferred its right to work the mine to Captain Engledue, then agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, for a period of twenty years; but in the following year this gentleman, with the permission of Government, made over his lease to Messrs. Gisborne & Co., of Calcutta, who worked the mine for about two years,

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

316 and in 1851 transferred their rights to Mr. W. Moran, of Calcutta.
648 The last lessee, however, preferred buying his coal to mining it; and
655 Government, seeing that the mines were not worked in a satisfactory manner, resumed the beds in 1859, and advertised them for letting. No person, however, has since come forward to work the mine. The Lá-ká-dong coal mines are the sole property of Government, which in the year 1848 leased the mining rights to Mr. B. W. Darley. This gentleman in the following year made over his lease to Messrs. Gisborne & Co., who soon afterwards transferred it to Mr. Moran. This gentleman surrendered his lease in 1859, when the mines were advertised for letting, but no one has since come forward and undertaken to work the coal. Between 1850 and 1856, while the mines were worked, about 5100 tons of coal were extracted for exportation.

In Mr. Allen's Report, dated 1858, it is stated that the coal of the Hills then found a ready sale at Dacca and elsewhere at 8 *dnnás* per *maund;* and that the average quantity exported into Bengal was about
[435] 25,000 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 12,500, or £1250. According to the local trade reports, this exportation would appear to have entirely died out; but the Bengal registration returns record 2965 *maunds* of coal, valued at Rs. 1482, or £148, at the rate of 8 *dnnás* per *maund*, as exported from Sylhet District in the year 1876-77. This supply was probably derived from the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills.

317 LIMESTONE QUARRIES.—A limestone formation prevails more or less along the whole southern face of the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills. The quarries are chiefly situated in the beds and on the banks of rivers and water-courses.

The limestone-quarrying localities in the Khásí Hills are the following twenty-six:—(1) Bha-wál; (2) Bor-syr-mai; (3) By-rang, *alias* Wáh-long; (4) Bor-púnjí; (5) Chún-jurá; (6) Dholai; (7) Dwárá; (8) Ichhámati; (9) Lúm-dih-long; (10) Lan-grin; (11) Long-long; (12) Máo-nai; (13) Máo-don; (14) Máo-kár-tillá; (15) Mohesh-kháli; (16) Máo-long; (17) No-kriá; (18) Páthárié; (19) Ram-seng-rai-skeh; (20) Soh-lai; (21) Silai; (22) Shellá; (23) Tanglá; (24) Tang-wai; (25) Um-song; (26) Um-tymá. In the Jáintiá Hills, the following seven:—(1) Chún-chhorá; (2) Lámápushi; (3) Litháng; (4) Myrli Púnjí; (5) Nongthá-long; (6) Rúpnáth; (7) Rowai. The supply of limestone is literally inexhaustible. The wants of Calcutta and of the whole of Lower Bengal
648 have been satisfied from these hills from time immemorial. During
651 the year 1876-77 the estimated export was 1,600,000 *maunds*, valued
317

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

against Rs. 25,000, or £2,500, twenty years earlier. The supply of piece-goods is derived directly from Dacca.

A curious feature in the trade of the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills is the total absence of Márwári or Jain merchants—an enterprising class, who are found everywhere else in Assam, even to the farthest corners of the Brahmaputra valley. There are a few Bengálí traders from Dacca, who do not take up a permanent residence in the Hills; but the great bulk of the business remains in the hands of the natives, who themselves reap the profits and are said to be keen at a bargain.

The principal markets at the foot of the Hills, on the Sylhet side, are Bholáganj, Chhaták, Lakhát, Jaíntiápur, Jafling, Pharálbázár, Máodong, Ponatit, Sónápur, Molághul, and Lengjut. Many of these are situated within the Sylhet boundary; but they are all frequented by Khásí and Synteng traders, who spend their whole time in passing from one market village to another. The markets or *háts* are held at regular intervals of eight days (for the Khásí week consists of this number), with the object of permitting the same people to visit the different places in rotation.

CAPITAL.—Such little capital as the people possess is either employed in trade or lent out upon interest. In a few cases it is hoarded and allowed to remain idle. In small loan transactions, whether articles are pledged as security or not, the interest usually charged is one *dnná* in the rupee per month, or 75 per cent. per annum. In larger transactions the rate of interest per month varies from 2 to 3 per cent. Nothing is charged in the name of interest where lands are mortgaged as security for a loan, as the land is always made over to the mortgagee in lieu thereof, and he is only bound to restore it on payment of the amount lent. In petty advances for agricultural purposes, part of the produce is given by the cultivator at something less than market rates in repayment of the amount borrowed. Limestone quarrying is the only industry in the District carried on by European agency.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.—The revenue realized from the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills has increased considerably in recent years. As the Khásí States are treated as semi-independent, the receipts from that portion of the District are altogether insignificant, with the exception of the dues levied from the lime quarries. The larger part of the revenue in Jáintiá is derived from the house tax. For 1835, when British authority was first established in the Khásí Hills,